

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USINT CAIRO

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FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 738 ACTION AMMAN SECSTATE INFO
GENEVA MOSCOW TEL AVIV USUN BAGHDAD 18 JAN

QUOTE

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

AMMAN FOR SECRETARY

DEPT ALSO PASS CAIRO

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR SY SX

SUBJ: SYRIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD SUEZ DISENGAGEMENT

REF: BIEUT 609

1. BEIRUT'S INDEPENDENT AN NAHAR JAN 18 CARRIED EXCLUSIVE
ARTICLE CONFIRMING EARLIER PRESS REPORTS FROM
KUWAIT THAT SYRIAN PRES ASSAD--FEARFUL OF ISRAELI
ATTACK ON SYRIA FOLLOWING DISENGAGEVNT ON SUEZ
FRONT--RECENTLY MADE SECRET VISIT TO BAGHDAD TO REQUEST
RETURN OF IRAQI FORCES TO SYRIA. QUOTING
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"RELIABLE SOURCES" IN DAMASCUS, NAHAR CLAIMED VISIT

TOOK PLACE IN FIRST WEEK JAN AND THAT PRES BAKR AGREED TO ASSAD'S REQ. ACCORDING TO NAHAR, ASSAD INFORMED BAKR OF HIS FEARS THAT US PRESSURE ON ISRAEL WOULD CEASE FOLLOWING SUEZ DISENGAGEMENT, AND BOTH MEN AGREED COORDINATE THEIR POLICIES DURING NEXT STAGE IN ME DEVELOPMENTS IN ORDER STRENGTHEN SYRIA'S HAND. AT SAME TIME,, HANAR'S SOURCES CONTEND THAT DESPITE ABOVE-MENTIONED RAPPROACHMENT, NO RPT NO UNION BETWEEN SYRIA DN IRAQ IS EXPECTED TAKE PLACE, THAT SARG'S EVENTUAL PARTICIPATION IN SETTLEMENT EFFORT REMAINS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE, AND THAT SARG PREPARED GO AHEAD WITH SECRETARY TPKISSINGER'S UPCOMING VISIT TO DAMASCUS.

2. FROM BAGHDAD, ASSAD REPORTEDLY FLEW (AT BREZHNEV'S INVITATION) TO MOSCOW, WHERE HE SAID TO HAVE DISCUSSED (A) SYRIAN PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA CONF AND SOVIETGUARANTEES RE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM GOLAN, AND (B) INCREASED SOV MILITARY SUPPORT FOR SARG ON CONTINGENCY OUTRIGHT ATTACK SYRIA FOLLOWING SUDS DISENGAGEMENT. SOVS REPORTEDLY TOLD ASSAD THEY VIEW SYRIA'S PRESENCE AT GENEVA ESSENTIAL IN ORDER FORESTALL ISRAELI ATTACK AND ENSURE "PEACE EFFORTS DO NOT STOP AT CANAL".

3. NAHUV ARTICLE ALSO NOTED CJARJZAT HAD MET WITH ASSAD IN DAMASCUS PRIOR TO TRAVELING TO ASWAN JAN 16 FOR TALKS WITH SADAT, ALLEGED PURPOSE OF WHICH WAS TO PROPOSE SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN-PLO SUMMIT MEETING TO WORK OUT AGREEMENT ON COMMON POLICIES TO BE FOLLOWED IN NEXT STAGE OF "POLITICAL STRUGGLE" WITH ISRAEL (BEIRUT 610). PAPER ALSO NOTED THAT SARG FONMIN KHADDAM IS VISITING RIYADH TO LAY GROUNDWORK FOR ASSAD-FEISAL MEETING WHICH SARG HOPES WILL ENSURE POLITICAL COOPERATION ON PART OF SAUDIS.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH DAMASCUS RADIO CARRIED ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUEZ DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, SARG HAS SO FAR MADE NO OFFICIAL COMMENT ON IT, DESPITE FACT THAT JAN 17 REUTERS DISPATCH FROM DAMASCUS REPORTS SYRIAN OFFICIALS ANGERED BY EGYPTIAN "TREACHERY" AND THREATENING SEVER RELATIONS WITH SADAT (LATTER INTENTION REPORTEDLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ALREADY DENIED BY SARG TO UPI). IF REPORTS OUTLINED PARAS 1-3 ABOVE ARE CORRECT (AND WE BELIEVE THIS LIKELY), WOULD APPEAR THAT ASSAD, HAVING DONE HIS UTMOST MUSTER MILITARY SUPPORT FOR SYRIA IN ANTICIPATION OF SUEZ DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, IS NOW TRYING PRESERVE SETTLEMENT OPTION FOR SARG. DECON 1/18/75.
HOUGHTON
UNQUOTE RUSH

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